

# MUSEUM NEWS

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART  
FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

NUMBER 108

TOLEDO, OHIO

JUNE, 1945



MISS EMMA GORDON SHIELDS

SAMUEL F. B. MORSE

INSTALLED IN THE MAURICE A. SCOTT GALLERY



# MUSEUM NEWS

## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

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*Art is that science whose laws applied to all things made by man make them most pleasing to the senses.*

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*George W. Stevens*

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### EDITORIAL

THIS, the first issue of the Museum News since victory over Germany, gives opportunity for a few reflections upon art and war.

We and our allies made every effort to spare historic monuments, works of art, landmarks of every sort even when they lay directly in the path of an assault. The British frequently spared the Cologne railroad station to avoid all possibility of damaging the Cathedral, though there are many who believe that it ranks only as a landmark rather than a work of art.

Our adversaries did not hesitate, when it suited their convenience or offered opportunity to vent their anger, to destroy any structure, no matter how venerable or beautiful. Nor did they fail to recognize the cash value of movable pictures, sculptures and the like, and to seize and carry off vast quantities of them for the personal use of a few as well as the general edification of the masses.

Fortunately much, perhaps nearly all, of the artistic loot has been recovered. On the other hand, the damage to and destruction of famous and beautiful edifices in England, France, Italy, Holland, and other countries has been tremendous. Never again will one see many a city as it once was.

We in these United States have been particularly fortunate and should be correspondingly grateful. We have no cities to rebuild, no mentally and physically starved population to bring back to

## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

health and vigor. Our cultural and intellectual heritage remains intact.

In our own Toledo Museum we have many a painting, sculpture, print, book and piece of glass which would have been eagerly grasped by the Germans had they been trampling over this country as they were over most of Europe. These things are here in Toledo for the people to enjoy. They are serving their purpose only when they are being seen by appreciative and understanding eyes. Everyone is welcome at the Museum. The summer is an excellent time to store up visions of beauty from the arts as well as from nature. The Museum is open every day and on Sunday afternoons, and there is never any charge for admission.

### MORSE, PAINTER AND INVENTOR

IN KEEPING with the tendency to extravagant statement so richly nurtured by salesmanship and advertising, a recent book on Samuel Finley Breese Morse is entitled "The American Leonardo". Such hyperbole does little credit to either man. The one need not bask in the reflected glory of the other, nor can confer added honor upon him. Both were men of diverse interests and versatile talents. That the abilities of both ran to painting and invention is perhaps occasion for remark; their achievements in each field are scarcely comparable. Basis for relative esthetic evaluation is almost non-existent. The shrewd judgment of the market-place would not rate a score, even several score, of Morse's paintings of as high value as even the least scrap of canvas covered over by Leonardo's brush. The brief speculative writings of Leonardo anticipated many a later proven scientific theory, but he made no such mechanical contribution to the physical and intellectual progress of his age as was the development of the telegraph.

S. F. B. Morse was born in 1791, the son of a Congregational minister in Charlestown, Massachusetts. His mother's grandfather was Samuel Finley, a president of Princeton, and for him and her father, Mr. Breese, the firstborn was named. In time he went to Andover and thence to Yale. In neither was he a distinguished student. In college he listened with interest to lectures on electricity and spent a considerable amount of time in painting, developing quite a knack of catching a likeness in miniature or in large. Before finishing at Yale he asked his parents to allow him to study with Washington Allston, a painter who had made for himself a reputation at the age of thirty. He was placed instead with a bookseller. Painting on the side, he produced an historical canvas of sufficient



## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

merit to draw praise from Allston and Gilbert Stuart, then resident in Boston. As a result, he was before long on his way to London with Allston.

Arrived there, he roomed with another American who was to make his mark as an artist, Charles Leslie, and Morse, although Allston's pupil, profited also from the instruction of Benjamin West, aging American president of the Royal Academy. After less than two years abroad, in 1813, he exhibited a painting at the Royal Academy which won praise, and the cast of the sculptured model for the single figure of the same painting was shown at the Society of Arts, where it won the gold medal. It is an interesting example of fair play that even during a war between England and the United States, artists and art students from the former colonies were welcomed in the mother country and were at no disadvantage in competing for prizes.

A faithful follower of West and of Allston, Morse had no desire to become a portrait painter. Just before his return to America in 1815 he wrote that he hoped to rival the genius of Raphael, Michael Angelo or Titian; that he hoped to be the brightest star in the constellation of genius rising in his country. In this high ambition he was to be disappointed. The monumental pictures which he attempted were artistic and commercial failures, equally unappealing in his day and our own. Perforce he turned to portraiture, the only branch of the arts which then offered any prospect of a livelihood.

Even portrait commissions were rare in Boston in 1816, so Morse toured the other cities of New England, where he did rather a brisk business in small likenesses. Early he began to tinker with mechanics, and with his brother developed a new, though unsuccessful and unprofitable, fire engine. The desire for portraits was said to be greater in South Carolina than in the North, so in 1818 he visited an uncle in Charleston, and during the season is said to have had orders for one hundred and fifty portraits. In the two succeeding winters he prospered greatly in Charleston, but in his fourth year patronage grew negligible, and he returned home discouraged but practiced and disciplined in his handling of the brush.

For the next few years he continued his painting with indifferent success in New England and New York. In 1825 a great opportunity came to him, and he made the most of it. Lafayette was visiting America. The City of New York commissioned Morse, in competition with the leading artists of the day, to paint a full-length portrait of him. The sketch of the head, which he did from sittings in Washington, is only exceeded in quality among his pictures by the full-length which he finished from it in his New York studio. Regardless

## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

of the interest of the subject, both show penetrating grasp of character, vigorous and fluid handling of his medium.

Into the succeeding years were crowded many portraits and occasional landscapes, the founding of the National Academy of Design and its guidance as first and long-continuing president, and an extended trip to the Continent, which he had not previously visited, armed with commissions for scenic views and copies from the galleries. On the return voyage from this European visit was born the new interest which was within a decade to terminate his career as an artist. At sea he conceived the idea of the recording electric telegraph. Even so, for a time his experiments toward perfecting that device were but a competitor with his painting, and invention might not in the end have triumphed had it not shown increasing prospects of success just when patronage of Morse the artist continuously declined.

As president of the National Academy as well as an artist thoroughly trained in the grand manner of historical painting he had every right to expect to be awarded one of the four panels for the Rotunda of the nation's Capitol, yet the committee passed him by. His appointment as Professor of the Literature of the Arts of Design at New York University, though it represented the first creation of a chair of the fine arts in the United States, was largely an empty honor, for few indeed were the students who sought his instruction. He is thought to have painted his last portrait in 1839. His death occurred in 1872. In the intervening years his time was so occupied with the development of the telegraph, the business details and controversies connected therewith, the laying of the Atlantic cable, and various excursions into politics, that there was no time for the practice of art. In fact, on one of his trips to Paris (in 1845) he visited neither the Louvre nor any other of the galleries that had previously been his familiar haunts. Yet the artistic produce of his early years is of quantity and quality to establish for him a high position in early nineteenth century American painting.

Indicative of his abilities is the portrait of Emma Gordon Shields which has been recently acquired by the Toledo Museum for the Maurice A. Scott Gallery. Miss Shields was a New Orleans belle, who had relatives in Charleston, South Carolina. Presumably she was visiting there during one of Morse's sojourns, and was then painted by him. If so, the picture would have been done between 1818 and 1821. In some ways it is reminiscent of Morse's portrait of his young wife, though less informal and free in pose. It also suggests its period, being similar to the works of the artist's American contemporaries, to say nothing of echoing the style of the English



## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

portraitists. Of the painters of his time only Sully could have surpassed him in sympathetic and successful treatment of the charming subject. The composition is satisfying, the drawing skillful. Morse's love of painting feminine finery is patent in the handling of the shawl thrown over one arm, the more subdued note of the drapery under the lady's left elbow. Even the convention of the rose lightly held adds a note of charm. A most delightful work, it well displays the qualities which brought high praise to its artist while living, and assures him the continuing interest of connoisseurs and laymen.

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR 1944 ✓

IN THE history of the Toledo Museum, the year 1944 will be distinguished by two notable events. One of these is the acquisition of the Pesellino; the other the exhibition of the masterpieces from the Cook Collection. They represent, and handsomely, the two most important efforts of the Museum, the development of its own collections and the supplementing of those collections by the temporary showing of important works of art.

A museum exists by virtue of its collections. We would not, in times of peace, journey to the Louvre, the Prado, the National Gallery, the Uffizi, were it not for the great paintings which have been assembled in each. The names of Florence, Siena, Perugia, even of Athens and Rome, would be far less widely and favorably known were they not all rich in the works of art of past ages. Our advancing armies spare artistic monuments and antiquities at any cost save loss of life. The produce of man's genius, whether literary, scientific, musical or artistic, is precious to us, and it, along with many other things, we struggle to preserve for ourselves and for posterity.

The original and fundamental purpose of museums is the collection and preservation of works of art. To it other objectives have been added, for the unseen picture is failing to do its duty of giving pleasure to mankind. Hence much embroidery has been spun about the first fabric of the museum, all of it to the end that it might draw to its main purpose, the enjoyment of art, a constantly enlarging circle of people.

The formation of museum collections is not a casual purchasing of pictures and other things that happen to appeal to the taste of a director or art committee. Nor is it a gracious acceptance of all gifts proffered by well-meaning donors. It is rather the seeking out of material which will fit into a broad and pre-determined pattern and which will conform to certain standards of quality. Both pattern and standards have long since been set for the Toledo Museum by precept and example of the Founder.

## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS



THE TRIUMPHAL CAR

HANS SEBALD BEHAM

GIFT OF H. M. DUNBAR

On the year just passed the Pesellino sheds its lustre. Representing the Madonna and Child accompanied by St. John and two angels, the picture has been in this country for a long time. Once in the collection of Robert Hoe of printing press fame, soon after his works of art and library were sold in 1911 it passed into that of Mr. and Mrs. Harold I. Pratt, where it remained until just before its purchase by the Toledo Museum. Previous to its coming to this country, it had been in two famous European collections, those of William Graham of London, and Oscar Hainauer of Berlin. It comes to us as the gift of Edward Drummond Libbey. Philip Hendy, who was quite familiar with it through its exhibition at the Fogg Museum in Cambridge in 1927, comparing it to the most famous of Pesellino's works, the altarpiece in the National Gallery, said that the painting which we now have must always have been the more beautiful. No less an authority than Bernard Berenson spoke of it as "the most noteworthy and admirable" of the larger paintings by Pesellino. Added to the Filippino Lippi and the Piero di Cosimo, which we have had for some time, the Pesellino fits into our scheme for presenting one of the greatest periods of man's intellectual activity—the fifteenth century in Italy.

From the fund bequeathed to us by Miss Elizabeth C. Mau we have purchased five splendid contemporary American paintings. Miss Mau, a retired school teacher, died in 1942. She left to the Museum over \$13,500.00. With a portion of this money, there have now been acquired thirteen paintings by leading contemporary American artists, and others will be added from our future exhibitions. When the bequest has been expended we will have about twenty paintings forming a homogeneous collection which will long perpetuate Miss Mau's memory and give pleasure to countless Toledo people.

Our principal gift of the year is a group of fine Chinese porcelains and two pieces of Korean pottery which were presented by Mr. H. A. Fee of Adrian, Michigan. Mr. Fee has from time to time made gifts to the Museum, greatly enhancing our showing of



## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

Oriental art. Through many years he has assembled a fine collection for his own enjoyment and in giving portions of it to the Museum he is offering an inspiration to many people.

In the same field we have acquired a Chinese porcelain vase of the Ch'ing Dynasty as the gift of Mr. Libbey; and nine pieces of Chinese glass from the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology in exchange for some duplicate pieces of Spanish glass.

A portrait of Dr. Morrison by John Neagle, prominent American artist of the forepart of the nineteenth century, has been acquired for the Maurice A. Scott Gallery. From the Shoemaker fund a magnificent engraving by Albrecht Durer has been purchased to adorn our print collection. An Islamic enamelled glass bowl of the fourteenth century was acquired as the gift of Mr. Libbey from the Eumorfopoulos sale in London.

From the very founding of the Museum, the temporary exhibition has been the backbone of our current activities. In this program we give much attention to the arts, fine and applied, of our own time and country. We also include the art of earlier days. This year we have had the great good fortune to secure for an extended period sixteen of the masterpieces from the Cook Collection, Richmond, England. This showing takes its place in importance with all the great exhibitions which we have had in previous years. It is not built around the art of a particular time and place as were our Venetian and Spanish exhibitions, nor the development of a style or trend in art as were our showings of Impressionist and Modernist works. The common denominator of the paintings included in it is rather their great artistic quality, the characteristic which, for that matter, we seek in all of our exhibitions.

The Thirty-first Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Paintings gave evidence of the great progress in sound and fundamental workmanship which is being made by artists in this country. The Thorne Rooms in Miniature attracted remarkable attention here as they have elsewhere, and were responsible for the gain in attendance which was made during the year. The showings of ancient American art and Brazilian architecture in the early part of the year completed the 1943-44 series of exhibitions of the art of the Western Hemisphere. In addition to the annual display of the work of Toledo artists held in May, eight individual Toledoans exhibited their productions at various times during the year.

We made forty loans to other exhibitions. Two pictures were sent to London, we having been asked to arrange for a group of works owned in this country to be sent over for a showing of Yugoslav art at Burlington House. A number of our most important



THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS



SPODE PLATE

LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

GIFT OF HELEN GALLIERS BURROUGHS

paintings were lent to the galleries in Toronto and Montreal. We sent twelve of our contemporary American paintings to form a complete exhibition at the University of Missouri. We had one picture shown in Mexico City, and others in places ranging from California to New York, from Florida to Massachusetts.

Our attendance has increased slightly, a matter of 5,600 over that for 1943, to 209,103 of which 87,000 were children and 122,000 adults. Our membership, under the influence of a quiet campaign in the fall has increased from 541 to 599.

To simplify our operations and to make them more effective, we have consolidated our Educational Department with our School of Design, although still keeping our statistics separate. Our School attendance for 1944 amounted to 11,000 adults and 28,000 children, a total of 39,972, some 6,000 less than for the preceding year. Our attendance at general educational activities was about 5,000 less than for the previous year, amounting to 43,536, consisting of 27,000

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS



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BEQUEST OF MRS. H. A. FEE

children and 16,000 adults. At our music activities we had 13,000 children and 36,000 adults, a total of 49,733.

We doubt that we can anticipate increased interest in our educational activities so long as we are a country at war. We have felt that it was our duty to maintain such of our work as retained a substantial following but that we should not resort to dubious expedients, to efforts which only the most elastic conscience could consider as promoting the arts, in order to produce a shallow semblance of interest in the Museum and its work.

We hope eventually to again be able to maintain the Museum and its grounds in the style to which it had once been accustomed. To that end we could discuss at length our postwar plans. We hesitate to do so because we feel that for the present the most important postwar plan is the plan to end the war.

In closing let us express our thanks to our Officers and Trustees for their helpful advice and interest, to our staff for their loyal and devoted efforts, to the newspapers and the radio stations for making known our offerings to the people of Toledo, and to all those people for the appreciation which they have shown of our efforts to bring the inspiration of art and music into their lives.





NEW ENGLAND WINTER

JOHN WHORF

GIFT OF C. LOCKHART MC KELVY

## WATER COLORS BY JOHN WHORF<sup>NL 3</sup>

A COLLECTION of watercolors by contemporary American painters is slowly but steadily being developed by the Museum. It already includes a representative group showing varied techniques and styles,—landscapes, still life and outdoor studies expressing individual viewpoints and methods.

Although it is the Museum's policy not to duplicate the works of a single artist, it has fortuitously come by three water colors by John Whorf, young painter who has achieved high rank among water colorists. One of the paintings dates from the very beginning of his career, the others are recent works, characteristic of his best, and the three offer an interesting study of an artist's growth.

New England Winter, the gift of C. Lockhart McKelvy, was painted in 1925, when the artist was only twenty-two years of age. His first exhibition was held two years earlier, at Hartford, Connecticut, probably during or just following his student days at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School and at Provincetown. Autumnal reds and browns are used for the clumps of barren shrubs and



WET SNOW

JOHN WHORF

trees and to indicate the winding road, which are the only details, against a background of snow-covered hills. There is little painting on the hills, the white masses being formed by large areas of untouched paper. This work is completely unlike his more mature style, but in its vigorous simplicity foreshadows later artistry.

Another scene of New England is *Wet Snow*, probably painted about 1938. Here the promise of his earlier work has been fully realized in the complete ease and facility of painting, the clean washes, the continued, though less casual use of white paper as highlights, and the amazingly brilliant dark tones. Colorful roofs and windows of the houses and their reflection in the wet road are vivid accents against the sky and snow. To the smallest detail, such as the figure of the man shoveling snow, he gives an authenticity and individuality. The quiet and peace of a New England village is admirably achieved in this work.

*West Indies Scene* is Whorf's third water color in the Museum. It was perhaps painted within a brief time of the *Wet Snow* and offers an interesting comparison in subject and feeling. The vivid color—blues predominating—creates dramatic intensity in this treatment of deep water. Contrast is effected by the sunlit boat moving slowly in the midst of rolling waves. The painting has been





WEST INDIES SCENE

JOHN WHORF

compared with the West Indies water colors of Winslow Homer, and there is in fact the same freshness and breadth of vision brought to similar subjects, based on the love of the sea which both had learned on the New England coast. It was shown in the Eighteenth International Water Color Exhibition of the Art Institute of Chicago, and later in Toledo and elsewhere in the circuited portion of that exhibition. It is a brilliant example of Whorf's paintings of the sea.

During the past ten years Whorf has painted in many parts of the world, in Canada, the Caribbean, North Africa, France, and his own New England, where he makes his home. Each year his New York exhibition has shown an advancing mastery of the use of color, free and forceful technique, and harmony of arrangement. His paintings of hunting and fishing in the north woods are especially appealing to all lovers of outdoor sports, and these with his dynamic marines predominate in his recent works, though other subjects of wide diversity are also included. Nude figure studies and ballet compositions shown in a recent exhibition of his works evidence his ability in handling the unaccustomed subject, as well as the more usual of his repertoire.

## SUMMER EXHIBITIONS <sup>MLJ</sup>

THE MUSEUM'S Thirty-second Annual Exhibition of Selected American Paintings opened on June 3, and will be on view for the remainder of the summer. This annual exhibition, arranged as a resume of the progress of American art during the year, is an interesting commentary on the development of individual artists and the general direction of American art.

Sixty-three paintings have been chosen, encompassing a great variety of subjects,—still life, portraits and figure studies, landscapes and scenes of daily life, and a considerable range of techniques from the conservative to the modern.

Among the outstanding figures shown are those by Julien Binford, Robert Brackman, Jerry Farnsworth, Henry Varnum Poor, Helen Sawyer, Simka Simkhovitch, Raphael Soyer, Eugene Speicher, Frederick Taubes, and Esther Williams. Henry Schnakenberg's Depot Canteen, and a descriptive study of two weary soldiers travelling, Furlough's End by Georges Schreiber, are the only ones having a military aspect. There are a few excellent still-life subjects, the work of Luigi Lucioni, Henry Lee McFee, George A. Picken, Waldo Peirce, Furman J. Finck. Completing the list of those represented in the exhibition are: Merrill A. Bailey, Edith Blum, Louis Bouche, Charles Burchfield, John Carroll, Russell Cowles, Gladys Rockmore Davis, Joseph De Martini, Louis Di Valentin, Yvonne Pene du Bois, Dean Fausett, Carl Gaertner, Raphael Gleitsman, John Edward Heliker, Harry Hering, Dorothy Hoyt, Peter Hurd, Morris Kantor, Hilde Kayn, Walt Killam, Georgina Klitgaard, John Koch, Leon Kroll, Sidney Laufman, Molly Luce, Peppino Mangravite, Fletcher Martin, Henry Mattson, Henrick Mayer, Herbert Meyer, Robert Philipp, Hobson Pittman, Constance C. Richardson, Louis Ritman, Boardman Robinson, Iver Rose, Andree Ruellan, Patso Santo, Zoltan Sepeshy, John Sloan, Francis Speight, Carl Sprinchorn, Maurice Sterne, Ary Stillman, John Taylor and William Thon.

During July and August the Museum will exhibit in Gallery 8 fifty masterpieces of etching and lithography from the collection of Mrs. S. C. Walbridge. The group comprises work by the noted contemporary British etchers, Muirhead Bone, Frederick L. Griggs, Edmund Blampied, James McBey, Sir David Young Cameron, and by the French artists, Albert Besnard and J. L. Forain. Etchings by James McNeill Whistler and Joseph Pennell, and some of the best known lithographs of the American artist, George Bellows, are included among these important examples of graphic art.



## THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART NEWS

### NEW MEMBERS OF THE MUSEUM

EVIDENCE of the widespread positive interest in the welfare and activities of the Museum to be found in our community is the list which follows of more than one hundred persons who have joined the ranks of Museum Members since November 1, 1944. We are very appreciative of both their financial as well as moral support, and would be glad to have them urge their friends to become Members also.

Harold Anderson	Dr. Karl D. Figley	George J. Miller
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MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is open daily from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on Sundays and Holidays from 2 to 6 P.M. The Museum is closed on New Years and Christmas.

Admission to the Museum and its regular educational activities is free at all times.

There is no charge for tuition in its School of Design.

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone interested may become an Annual Member of the Museum by paying Ten Dollars a year, thereby securing all privileges of the Museum and contributing to the support of much of the free educational work for all of the children of Toledo.

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

I DESIRE to become a member of The Toledo Museum of Art, paying ten dollars (\$10) a year for full privileges for myself and members of my immediate family.

I hereby constitute Blake-More Godwin, Director of the Museum, my attorney in fact in my name and stead, to subscribe my name to the Articles of Incorporation.

Name.....

Address.....

Date.....

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART